

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS



Entrepreneurship and Individuals with Disabilities
ND Vocational Rehabilitation's Step-by-Step Guide to Self-Employment

The United States has a rich history of business innovation and success. A foundation of this success is the country's small business operators.


Included in this group are individuals with disabilities who are launching their own enterprises at twice the rate as the rest of the population.

Why are so many people with disabilities turning to self-employment? Because it offers many distinct advantages like:

- Independence
- Enjoyable work
- A sense of achievement or satisfaction
- Potential financial reward and
- Control over job security

For the right individual, self-employment represents real options and opportunities.





As an individual with a disability considering self-employment, it is important that you clearly understand the challenges you will face.

These challenges are the same as faced by individuals without disabilities and include:

- The likelihood of long hours and little free time, especially within five years.
- The chance of fluctuating income as market demand for your product or service changes, or as competition increases.
- The impact a business start-up will have on your family and your family's financial resources.
- The reality that your business may fail.
- Finally, as an individual with a disability, the possibility that the demands of the business may exacerbate your disability.



It is critical that you make the decision to start your own business for the right reason... because you have a sound business idea and you are committed to making it a success.

If you are considering self-employment because you believe that your disability leaves you with no other options, you should stop right now.

That is the path to failure.

Individuals who have the talent to envision and create new business opportunities are known as entrepreneurs and they have certain characteristics, like being:

- risk-takers
- aggressive
- competitive
- goal-oriented
- opportunistic and
- intuitive

As someone looking at self-employment, you need to honestly ask yourself, “Do I have these characteristics?” You should also ask key people you trust if they feel you have these characteristics.

If the answer is no, is self-employment really for you?

If the answer is “yes,” then you are about to embark on a process that will require a lot of work and a firm commitment.

As a North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) client, it is important that you understand the step-by-step process for pursuing self-employment under an Individualized Plan for Employment, or IPE.

This booklet is designed to clearly outline the steps followed by all four offices. These steps are meant to move you forward in a systematic approach to self-employment and in a manner that will build your opportunity for success.

This is not a speedy process, but one created to maximize possibilities through:

- research
- referrals and
- communication

The ultimate outcome of the process is largely dependant upon your willingness to do the work necessary to get your business started.



THE STEPS

Step 1:

During a meeting with your NDVR consultant, you indicate a desire to pursue Self-Employment.

Keep in mind that this decision should be based on a sound business idea for which you have a passion. It is not VR's role to find you a business concept.

Step 2:

Review the "Planning for Success" CD-ROM created by NDVR.

You will either be given a copy to take home and view, or you will be given the opportunity to view the CD at the office.



"PLANNING FOR SUCCESS" CD-ROM created by NDVR.



Step 3:

If you wish to move forward after viewing the “Planning for Success” CD, you will be asked to complete the Pre-Business Assessment Scale (Pre-BAS) contained on the CD.

This questionnaire is a basic outline of what you are planning to do with your business and helps you and your consultant with further planning.

Step 4:

You will meet with your consultant to review your Pre-BAS.

Following this review, you may be given action items to help formalize your business concept. Information may be transferred into the Business Plan also contained on the CD.

Step 5:

As a part of your planning process, you may be connected with SCORE, SBA or other business development programs to assist you in building a formal business plan.



Step 6:

Based on the progress in the development of your business plan, you will participate in the Goodman-Herzog Business Assessment Scale, or BAS, used by NDVR.

The Goodman-Herzog Business Assessment Scale (BAS) is a licensed assessment tool. It measures your aptitude in 5 areas:

- 1. Business Background*
- 2. Management Experience*
- 3. Technical Skills/Work Experience*
- 4. Market Demand*
- 5. Personal Credit/Financial Solvency*

The scores you receive in each of these respective areas are negotiated between you and a two-member NDVR team. Your final overall score is based on a weighted scale.

The BAS is not a Pass/Fail assessment, but rather a working document.

Step 4:

You will meet with your consultant to discuss the recommendations of the BAS team.

- If your final score on your BAS does not meet our minimum requirement, you may be asked to retake the BAS following completion of the recommendations of the BAS team.
- If you do not reach the minimum required score after three attempts, the NDVR state office will be asked to review your case.
- Once you achieve a suitable score, your consultant will make a decision concerning the level of NDVR financial support of your self-employment proposal.



MEDIATION

If you should disagree with your consultant's decision, or you feel you are being treated unfairly during the VR process, you are entitled to ask for mediation.

You should contact the North Dakota Client Assistance Program or CAP.

CAP assists clients and client applicants of NDVR services, Tribal 121 Vocational Rehabilitation Projects, or Independent Living services.

CAP may be reached at
North Dakota Client Assistance Program

1237 West Divide Avenue, Suite 3
Bismarck, ND 58501-1208

Phone: 701-328-8947

TDD: 701-328-8968

ND Toll Free: 800-207-6122

cap@nd.gov



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1-800-755-2745

